

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-22 (canceled).

Claim 23 (currently amended): A gaming device comprising:

a game operable upon a wager, the game including a plurality of reels, each of the reels defining a plurality of locations for a plurality of symbols, the reels displaying a plurality of different combinations of the symbols after the reels are spun at least one multiple times;

a plurality of winning conditions associated with a plurality of the combinations;

an award associated with each one of the winning conditions;

at least one wild function which is: (a) operable on ~~at least one but not all~~ a first one or more of the symbols in a first one of the combinations; (b) ~~inoperable on one or more of the symbols in a second one of the combinations, the first combination being different from the second combination~~; and (c) operable to increase a likelihood of meeting at least one of the winning conditions;

a triggering event that occurs when a designated one or more of the symbols is displayed during the game; and

a processor in control of the a display device, the processor operable to:

(a) determine if the triggering event occurs;

(b) cause the display device to visually distinguish a plurality of the locations of the reels from a plurality of the other locations of the reels;

(c) cause each of the first symbols displayed at each one of the visually distinguished locations to have the wild function;

(d) determine if any of the winning conditions are present, taking the wild function of said symbols into account; and

(e) provide the player with the awards associated with any of the winning conditions that are present.

Claim 24 (currently amended): The gaming device of Claim 23, which includes at least one instruction executable by the processor to: (a) cause a plurality of first symbols to have the wild function; and (b) cause each of the first symbols to be displayed one at a time. ~~sequentially cause each of the symbols displayed at each one of the visually distinguished locations to have the wild function.~~

Claim 25 (currently amended): The gaming device of Claim 23, which includes at least one instruction executable by the processor to simultaneously cause each of the first symbols displayed at each one of the visually distinguished locations to have the wild function.

Claim 26 (currently amended): The gaming device of Claim 25, wherein each of the first symbols displayed at the visually distinguished locations has an image, the gaming device including at least one instruction executable by the processor to cause the display device to simultaneously replace said images with designated images associated with the wild function.

Claim 27 (new): The gaming device of Claim 23, wherein: (a) the first combination of symbols is associated with a first pay line; and (b) the second combination of symbols is associated with a second pay line.

Claim 28 (new): The gaming device of Claim 23, wherein the gaming device has a data storage device which stores at least one instruction, the instruction being executable by the processor to communicate with a server over a network, the server storing data associated with the game.

Claim 29 (new): A gaming device comprising:

a game operable upon a wager, the game having a plurality of reels, each of the reels displaying a plurality of symbols of different types, the symbols being groupable to form a first group of symbols and a second group of symbols which is different from the first group of symbols; and

a processor in control of a display device, the processor operable to:

(a) cause the first and second groups of symbols to be displayed after the reels stop spinning;

(b) after a designated event occurs, apply a wild function to at least a first one of the symbols in the first group, wherein the wild function is:

(i) operable on at least one of the other symbols of a different type than the first symbol, the other symbol being within the first or second group, and

(ii) inoperable on one or more of the symbols in the second group, and

(c) determine whether a winning condition is present based, at least in part, on the wild function applied to the first symbol.

Claim 30 (new): The gaming device of Claim 29, wherein: (a) the first group of symbols is associated with a first pay line; and (b) the second group of symbols is associated with a second pay line.

Claim 31 (new): The gaming device of Claim 29, wherein the gaming device has a data storage device which stores at least one instruction, the instruction being executable by the processor to communicate with a server over a network, the server storing data associated with the game.

Claim 32 (new): The gaming device of Claim 29, which includes at least one instruction executable by the processor to: (a) cause a plurality of the symbols to have the wild function; and (b) cause each of said symbols to be displayed one at a time.

Claim 33 (new): The gaming device of Claim 29, which has a data storage device storing at least one instruction executable by the processor to cause each of the symbols with the wild function to be visually distinguished from the symbols which do not have the wild function.

Claim 34 (new): The gaming device of Claim 33, wherein each of the visually distinguished symbols has an image, the data storage device having at least one instruction executable by the processor to cause the images to be simultaneously replaced with designated images associated with the wild function.

Claim 35 (new): A gaming device comprising:

a game operable upon a wager, the game having a plurality of reels, each of the reels displaying a plurality of symbols, each of the symbols having at least one characteristic, a plurality of the characteristics being different from one another, and the symbols being combinable to form a first combination of symbols and a second combination of symbols, the first combination being different from the second combination; and

a processor in control of a display device, the processor operable to:

(a) cause the first and second combinations of symbols to be displayed after the reels stop spinning;

(b) after a designated event occurs, assign at least one of the characteristics to at least one of the symbols in the first combination, wherein the assigned characteristic:

(i) is different from the characteristic of said symbol,

(ii) includes the characteristic of at least one of the other symbols, and

(iii) excludes the characteristic of one or more of the symbols in the second combination, and

(c) determine whether a winning condition is present based, at least in part, on the characteristic assigned to said symbol.

Claim 36 (new): The gaming device of Claim 35, wherein: (a) the first combination of symbols is associated with a first pay line; and (b) the second combination of symbols is associated with a second pay line.

Claim 37 (new): The gaming device of Claim 35, wherein the gaming device has a data storage device which stores at least one instruction, the instruction being executable by the processor to communicate with a server over a network, the server storing data associated with the game.

Claim 38 (new): The gaming device of Claim 35, which includes at least one instruction executable by the processor to, after the designated event occurs, assign a plurality of the characteristics to a plurality of selected symbols in the first combination or second combination, wherein each one of the assigned characteristics:

- (i) is different from the characteristic of the selected symbol to which said characteristic is being assigned,
- (ii) includes the characteristic of at least one symbol other than said selected symbol,
- (iii) excludes the characteristic of one or more of the symbols in the first combination if said selected symbol is in the second combination, and
- (iv) excludes the characteristic of one or more of the symbols in the second combination if said selected symbol is in first combination.

Claim 39 (new): The gaming device of Claim 38, which includes at least one instruction executable by the processor to cause an image associated with each one of assigned characteristics to be displayed simultaneously or one at a time.

Claim 40 (new): The gaming device of Claim 38, which has a data storage device storing at least one instruction executable by the processor to cause each one of the selected symbols to be visually distinguished from the other symbols.

Claim 41 (new): A method for operating a gaming device, the method comprising:

- (a) receiving at least one input from a player;
- (b) spinning a plurality of reels wherein each of the reels displays a plurality of symbols of different types, and the symbols are groupable to form a first group of symbols and a second group of symbols, the first group being different from the second group;
- (c) displaying the first and second groups of symbols after the reels stop spinning;
- (d) after a designated event occurs, applying a wild function to at least a first one of the symbols in the first group, wherein the wild function is:
 - (i) operable on at least one of the other symbols of a different type than the first symbol, the other symbol being within the first or second group, and
 - (ii) inoperable on one or more of the symbols in the second group; and
- (e) determining whether a winning condition is present based, at least in part, on the wild function applied to the first symbol.

Claim 42 (new): The method of Claim 41, which includes: (a) associating a first pay line with the first group of symbols; and (b) associating a second pay line with the second group of symbols.

Claim 43 (new): The method of Claim 41, which includes storing at least one instruction which is executable by the processor to communicate with a server over a network, the server storing data associated with the symbols.

Claim 44 (new): The method of Claim 41, which includes: (a) causing a plurality of the symbols to have the wild function; and (b) causing each of said symbols to be displayed simultaneously or one at a time.

Claim 45 (new): A method for operating a gaming device, the method comprising:

- (a) receiving at least one input from a player;
- (b) spinning a plurality of reels wherein:
 - (i) each of the symbols has at least one characteristic,
 - (ii) a plurality of the characteristics are different from one another, and
 - (iii) the symbols of the reels are combinable to form a first combination of symbols and a second combination of symbols, the first combination being different from the second combination;
- (c) displaying the first and second combinations of symbols after the reels stop spinning;
- (d) after a designated event occurs, assigning at least one of the characteristics to at least one of the symbols in the first combination, wherein the assigned characteristic:
 - (i) is different from the characteristic of said symbol,
 - (ii) includes the characteristic of at least one of the other symbols, and
 - (iii) excludes the characteristic of one or more of the symbols in the second combination; and
- (e) determining whether a winning condition is present based, at least in part, on the characteristic assigned to said symbol.

Claim 46 (new): The method of Claim 45, which includes: (a) associating a first pay line with the first combination of symbols; and (b) associating a second pay line with the second combination of symbols.

Claim 47 (new): The method of Claim 45, which includes storing at least one instruction, the instruction being executable by the processor to communicate with a server over a network, the server storing data associated with the symbols.

Claim 48 (new): The method of Claim 45, which includes, after the designated event occurs, assigning a plurality of the characteristics to a plurality of selected symbols in the first combination or second combination, wherein each one of the assigned characteristics:

- (i) is different from the characteristic of the selected symbol to which said characteristic is being assigned,
- (ii) includes the characteristic of at least one symbol other than said selected symbol,
- (iii) excludes the characteristic of one or more of the symbols in the first combination if said selected symbol is in the second combination, and
- (iv) excludes the characteristic of one or more of the symbols in the second combination if said selected symbol is in first combination.

Claim 49 (new): The method of Claim 48, which includes causing an image associated with each one of assigned characteristics to be displayed simultaneously or one at a time.